SGPC that they have looked into the matter and they are perfectly satisfied that no arms have been stocked there in the Gurdwaras and on that basis, the hon. Home Minister is making a statement in the House.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He has got the information from the Government of Punjab.

श्री मुफ्ती मोहम्मद सईद : पंजाब गवर्नमेंट से हमने यह इत्तला ले ली है कि क्या ऐसा कहा है कि कहीं गुरुद्वारे में स्टाक पायलिंग आफ आर्म्स है और उनका जवाब है ऐसी बात नहीं है ।

श्री एस० बी० चव्हाण : एम० ओ० पी० सी० से पूछा है ?

श्री मुफ्ती मोहम्मद सईद : यह नहीं की बात है । . . . (व्यवधान) . . जितने भी उनके मेसेजेज आफ इफारमेशन है, SGPC may be the main source. That is there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 122. Absent. Question No. 123.

*122 [*The question SHRI H HANUMAN THAPPA was absent For answer, vide col. infra.*]

Setting up more post offices in the State of Orissa

*123. SHRI BASUDEB MOHAPATRA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Sub-Post Offices and Branch Post Offices which exist at present in the State of Orissa;

(b) whether there is a demand to set up more Post Offices in the rur a areas of the State;

(c) if so, the total number of Pos Offices likely to be opened in-that state during 1989-90 ?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI) : (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) At present there are 1331 Sub-Post Offices, (including 196 extra-departmental Sub-Post Offices) and 6339 branch Post Offices in Orissa.

(b) There are demands for setting up more Post Offices in the rural areas of Orissa.

(c) 81 proposals for openingof new Post Offices in the rural areas of the State have been formulated. In view of the continuing ban on creation of posts, these proposals require the concurrence of Ministry of Finance before these offices are sanctioned.

SHRI BASUDEB MOHAPATRA : In reply to part (b) of the question, the Minister has agreed that there are demands for setting up more post offices in the rural areas of Orissa. According to the demand of the public, as well as the norms fixed by the Department, the PMG, Orissa Circle, had recommended opening of branch Post offices at 150 places during the current financial year. The Department is not following the norms. According to the guidelines fixed by the Department—

"(i) A group of villages constituting a single gram pachayat will be eligible for a post office provided that (a) the aggregate population of the group of villages is not less than 3000 in normal rural areas and 1500 in hilly, backward and tribal areas and (b) there is no other Post Office within the group."

(ii) The Post Office will normally be opened at the headquarters village of the gram panchayat. If such a village falls within 3 kms of an existing Post Office, the post office may be opened in another suitable village within the same gram panchayat which fulfil the distance condition."

Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the norms and guidelines issued by the Department for opening new post offices in rural areas have been followed. If

so, what is the total number of gram panchayats in the State of Orissa having no Post Office so far and by when the new post offices will be opened within the jurisdiction of the concerned GPs?

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: Sir, it is a fact that there are these norms. When we went to the Finance Ministry for allocation of funds for opening up new post offices, the Finance Ministry expressed the opinion that there should be review of these provisions and also of the existing norms and the financial parameters. Now we are currently on that exercise. Opening of post offices in every gram panchayat, though it may be the objective, is a very Herculean task because there are 2,01,500 gram panchayats in our country. Currently we have provided post offices or postal facilities to about 80 per cent. Therefore, though we have kept this objective in view, it will take some time for us to fulfil these parameters. It is not only in the case of Orissa but it is throughout this country. I would like to inform the hon. Member that if we take the post offices per certain area or per certain population, then Orissa is definitely in a better position than even the all-India average or many other States. I am not saying that there are no demands from Orissa. But if you look at the figures, you will find that whereas there is one post office or one sub-post office for an all-India average of 22·35 km., for Orissa the figure is 20·20. And population-wise, whereas the all-India population figure getting postal facilities is 4,658, that for Orissa is 4,322.

This year we have some proposals. We are interacting with the Finance Ministry; and from the proposals it appears that out of 745 rural branch offices that it intends to open in the country subject to the concurrence of the Finance Ministry, 81 are in Orissa, and out of 62 departmental sub-post offices 7 are in Orissa.

SHRI BASUDEB MOHAPATRA: Sir, my specific question has not been answered. Through my first supplementary I wanted to know the number of GPs where there are no post offices.

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: I have the all-India figure. But I will give to the hon. Member the particular figure about Orissa. I will communicate it to him.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He will communicate it later on.

SHRI BASUDEB MOHAPATRA: Sir, my second supplementary is: As per the guidelines issued by the Department,

"Instructions have been issued to all Heads of Circles to consult Hon. Members of Parliament in regard to opening of new post offices and give due and urgent consideration to proposals recommended by them in the light of the aforestated norms."

Accordingly, I submitted a proposal for opening five branch post offices in my area, which was duly recommended by the PMG, Orissa also. I would like to know from the hon. Minister what happened to that proposal.

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: Sir, replying to the second part of the question first, it is true that these norms are there, but when we went to the Finance Ministry with proposals to open a number of Offices, the Finance Ministry expressed the view that there is need for review of the actual performance of the post offices already opened and secondly more offices can be considered only after the existing norms and financial parameters are reviewed. We have now taken some steps. The department has written to some of the selected institutions of the country to review in the light of this view of the Finance Ministry. Therefore, we have not been able to act strictly in accordance with the norms that were laid down by us. I know the

hon. Member wrote to the Department about opening of five post offices at Dehri, Mahram, Tentalibari, Tarasahi and Azamgarh. We have examined these proposals and have found that the proposal number 3 at Tentalibari fulfils the prescribed norms.

DR. NARREDDY THULASI REDDY: There is a ban on the recruitment of postal staff since 1984. There is a shortage of operating staff like the Postal Assistants, Postmen etc. resulting in more workload and decrease in efficiency. For example, in my own town there was one Postman when its population was 5,000; but now when the population is 30,000, still there is one Postman. I represented the matter several times. Even the Postmaster General, Andhra Pradesh, said that my request was justified and that he sent the proposals to the Director-General New Delhi, on 27th April, 1989, but no action has been taken so far. I would, therefore, like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government is going to lift the ban on the recruitment of postal staff.

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI : It is true that there was a total ban on recruitment in 1985-86 and in 1986-87 resulting in the fact that we could not open any new post office. But this ban was relaxed to a certain extent. Now we are faced with a dilemma. On the one hand there is demand to open up more post offices, on the other there is also a demand to equip the existing post offices with more number of personnel while the resource available is limited. Therefore, we have to make choices. That is why the number with which we want to man some post offices is less even though we desire to have more staff. But the problem remains that we are to make choice for going in for new post offices or . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN : The question is very simple. He wants to know if you are going to remove the ban on new recruitment. That is all.

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI : I submit that there has been some relaxation on the ban....*(Interruptions)*. We have now brought this before the Cabinet for approval of 2,800 persons for these post offices. We are awaiting the approval.

SHRI PASUMPON THA. KIRUTTINAN : Though the question pertains to Orissa, there is a demand all over the country including Tamil Nadu to have more post offices in rural areas. In the answer to the question it is stated :

> "81 proposals for opening of new post offices in rural areas have been formulated. In view of the continuing ban on creation of posts these proposals require the concurrence of the Ministry of Finance."

I would like to know from the hon. Minister in which year the ban was imposed and whether there is any proposal to remove this ban so that the rural population can have the post offices and the infrastructure can be created in this country.

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI : I have already replied to this point. I have also replied that we are now interacting with the Finance Ministry regarding review of the norms. Once the norms are reviewed in the light of the observations, we will come to some decisions.

कुछ चुने हुए राजमार्गों का एक्सप्रेस राजमार्गों के रूप में परिवर्तित किया जाना

*124. श्री अजीत जोगी : क्या जल-भूतल परिवहन मंत्री 3 मई, 1989 को राज्य सभा में अतारांकित प्रश्न 884 के दिए गए उत्तर को देखेंगे और यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि

(क) क्या सरकार देश में भूतल परिवहन के क्षेत्र में सुधार लाने की दृष्टि